

INFORMATION REPORT

25X1A

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a. Identity:

"Govorit Volga" is the simple Russian announcement identifying the broadcast transmissions now commonly regarded as the Soviet Armed Forces Radio Service for Germany. This symbolic name represents the maximum which the security-conscious Soviets have been willing to concede in the way of identification since the inception of the station in 1946. No call letters or significant station name, nor location or specific intended audience have ever been revealed by the station. Its transmitter at Koenigswusterhausen has been pinpointed only from considerable antenna direction work and reports seeping out of East Germany. The studio location remains a mystery although it is most commonly suspected to be at Potsdam. Its target audience becomes clear from the nature of the programs and the service range of the transmitter.

b. General Characteristics:

Radio Volga usually broadcasts its own program only 2 to 3 times a week, and the opening time of the program varies considerably. On Sundays and Soviet holidays there are two programs per day, one in the evening. The daily program generally starts between 1730 and 1930, Central European Time.

The wavelength of Radio Volga, 1141 meters, usually carries the German program of Berlin III until 1600 CET, when Radio Moscow's main program is relayed. This program is then interrupted for the station signal of Radio Volga, three bars of a melody in 4/4 rhythm.

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Radio Volga's program is, as a rule, composed as follows:

1. Some 15 to 20 minutes of a propaganda lecture on such subjects as vigilance, imperialist encirclement, military duties, and so forth. This part is sometimes replaced by "Information for Army Units and Subunits," containing commendations of distinguished soldiers, results of competitions in the military field, and the like, or by the reading of Pravda editorials.
2. This part is followed by "Songs of Soviet Composers," beginning with pompous recitals of nationalist songs, which gradually change to popular tunes and melodies of a purely entertainment character.
3. The third part is the so-called "Literary Program," during which prose narratives, sometimes with a bearing on the preceding lecture, are read. As a rule, these narratives are of very poor literary quality. They usually serve to illustrate the lecture. Sometimes, however, modern Soviet prose of high literary standard is offered.
4. The program is usually concluded by a concert of classical music.

c. Technical Characteristics:

The Radio Volga broadcasts are received over the long wave 263 kcs. Despite static, during the summer reception is better than in winter, when early darkness permits interference by other stations. Almost the same wavelength is used by the Leningrad transmitter. In addition, there are several more or less local beacon transmitters with very strong signals.

d. Language used:

The language used is Russian. There has been only one exception so far, when announcements were also made in German in a program dedicated to Soviet-German friendship.

e. Announcers:

All Radio Volga announcers and readers of lectures are anonymous. Eighty percent of all announcements and lectures are read by a female voice; however, there are two different male voices which read lectures and make announcements. Literary programs are not performed by the Radio Volga announcers; there are special Soviet artists usually from some theater, who are introduced to the listeners before they perform their parts. There are no special favorites reappearing regularly, with the exception of Nikolai Aristov whose name has repeatedly recurred.

f. News Broadcasts:

There is nothing of the conventional news cast in the Radio Volga program. Special events, such as the death of Stalin, the removal of Beria, and the June 17 revolt were not discussed in any lectures. Instead, the daily lecture was replaced by the reading of a pertinent newspaper editorial. With the exception of these editorials, no sources are ever quoted by Radio Volga. All material, except the announcements, seems to be tape recordings, judging from occasional repetitions of programs already monitored.

Apparently Radio Volga has its own editing staff or similar authority, which sees to it that the nature of its transmissions is kept at a constant tenor, regardless of topical events. Thus, such basic elements as military alertness, imperialist encirclement, the Lenin-Stalin myth have remained program pillars throughout the time this station has been monitored by the German Bureau.

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g. Programs:

1. Lectures: The lectures are read by the announcers without naming the author or quoting the source. The content of the lectures rarely deviates from the above-mentioned propaganda topics, the main subjects being military virtues, the care of Party and State for the well-being of the Soviet people, successes of the Soviet workers in building Communism, and agricultural themes under the motto "back to the farm."

Political developments in the USSR have not found distinct expression in the Radio Volga program, although Malenkov's name and his statements have appeared more frequently since the death of Stalin. The Lenin-Stalin myth remains unshaken, however.

On rare occasions the lectures are replaced by "News from Home," which are read along the Radio Moscow pattern of newscasts, with a female and a male voice alternating. The voices are those of the Radio Volga announcers. The contents deal with the successes of Soviet farmers and highlight kolkhoz activities.

2. Information for Army Units: This program consists of short talks, stressing the activities of distinguished soldiers and of entire units in their effort to increase their training standards and their "battle readiness." Sometimes letters from soldiers to Radio Volga's editorial office are read. These items are also read by a female and a male voice taking turns.

3. Literary Program: This program sometimes illustrates the lecture of the same day by giving practical examples; sometimes it offers independent literary entertainment of no propagandistic value. The literary programs are always in prose, sometimes short stories, sometimes excerpts from novels.

4. Musical-Literary Composition: This is a program of the lowest literary standard, consisting of songs and poems usually glorifying the Party, Soviet construction work, the successes of Communism, and so forth. These poems, which are shallow and pompous, are rendered with such pathos that the ordinary Western listener will find them ridiculous.

5. Plays: Sometimes, particularly on special historic occasions, the lecture and first musical part are followed by a play, which fills the rest of the transmission. These plays are usually dedicated to the history of the revolution and its leaders. The names of the performing theater and of the actors are always given. Besides this kind of play, there are sometimes so-called "Estrade Plays" which are usually composed of old Radio Moscow shows and offer sketches and humorous entertainment. Comedian Arkadiy Raikin is the star of these sketches, which frequently lash bureaucracy and similar shortcomings.

6. Concerts: There are various kinds of musical programs as carried by Radio Volga. The "Concert of Soviet Composers" concludes a lecture and serves as a bridge to the next item. The "Concert by the Army Song and Dance Troupe" carries new and old soldier songs, usually sung by a choir, and national dances and instrumental music, sometimes accompanied by whistling and handclapping. The "Estrade Concerts" contain hits from Soviet motion pictures and other light popular music. These concerts are usually broadcast on holidays and last longer than ordinary concerts.

"Radio Listeners' Request Concerts" are also mostly in the lighter vein, sometimes interrupted by requested poems or sketches. The names of the requesting persons are announced before the respective item. "Concert Lectures" are brief instructions on the life and works of some individual classical Russian or Soviet composer, followed by examples of his music. The concerts of classical music are invariably on a very high artistic level. Not only are the selections in excellent taste, but also the renditions are first-class, featuring such stars as violinist David Oistrakh, singer Lemishov, and others.

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